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THE LABOR ARGUS

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1911.



TO THE COMRADES AND WORKING MEN:

Look over the advertising in your paper. Patronize those who patronize you. Remember those who don't advertise in a labor paper are unfair to labor and are not worthy of your patronage.

CAPITALIST PRESS RESORTS TO UNTRUTHS.

The Charleston Gazette has evidently decided that the rising tide of Socialism must be checked, and in its issue of September 13th, it sets about the task in earnest. After devoting over half a column space to far from "glittering" generalities, having little or no connection with the subject which it finally tries to discuss, it makes the profound statement that Socialism has been tried, and that it "has never changed the nature of human beings."

The statement that Socialism has been tried, is absolutely untrue, and it seems scarcely credible that the Gazette writer did not know that he was uttering an untruth when he made the assertion. We challenge him to show where any state or nation has ever been organized on a Socialist basis.

Since Socialism has never been tried, it is impossible to say just what effect it would have on the "nature of human beings." But Capitalism has been tried—for two hundred years it has been tried—and its effect both upon humanity and the "nature of human beings," is well known, and constitutes the strongest indictment against it. In every nation where it has been introduced, it has debased and polluted the "nature of human beings." The pimp, the prostitute, the professional politician and grafter, the bribing senator, the hosts of criminals and degenerates, these are fitting commentaries on the effects of capitalism on the "nature of human beings." Wherever it has set its foot, Capitalism has built up vast fortunes on the one hand, and created hordes of hungry and unemployed wretches on the other. This is not caused by the innate viciousness of the "human nature," either of the capitalists or the workers. It is simply the natural working out of economic laws. It is the natural result of the ownership by a CLASS of the means upon which all depend for life.

To so arrange the system of production and distribution that no man who is willing to work shall be denied the privilege, and that no man who does not work shall receive of the products of labor, is the object of the Socialist Party. To the paid representative of coal, land, timber and railroad companies, which live upon the necessities of the people, this may seem like "voo-dooism," and "quackery," but to the thousands of poverty stricken, unemployed workmen in West Virginia, it is beginning to appear their only hope. Surely, the ownership by ALL the people of the means of life, could not bring any greater distress upon them than does the present system, which is founded on the ownership of the means of life by PART of the people.

The argument about "changing human nature," is old. It is also very foolish. Is that, then, the test to be applied to every proposed change in our laws or government? Must we ask, "will it change human nature," and if the answer be "no," shall we reject it? Evidently that is the opinion of the Gazette writer. But in the first part of his editorial he makes it plainly apparent that in his opinion it is impossible to "change human nature."

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from this: You can't change human nature. It is useless to pass laws that do not change human nature. Therefore, it is useless to pass any laws, or make any effort towards establishing a more just, humane and sensible system of government. Our present government is founded upon systematic robbery, but don't try to change it, for "you can't change the nature of human beings."

"There are too many patriot graves, too many home owners and home lovers to make it possible to spit upon the flag with impunity or to overturn the work of the fathers upon light cause."

The Socialist Party is not trying to besmirch the flag. God knows it has been befouled enough. When it comes into power, as it surely will, it will cleanse the flag of the filth which has been cast upon it. The men who have disgraced it, who have made our government a mockery, our flag an emblem of shame rather than of glory, are the bootling, bribing corporations, and their corrupt and servile tools, the corporation lawyers, the professional politicians and grafters. It is these men who have made every State capital from Maine to California, from Washington to West Virginia, a cesspool of corruption, and representative government a meaningless term. Some of the men who have "spit upon the flag" are in the United States Senate.

The Gazette writer is evidently entirely ignorant of the science of economics, as evidenced by the article in question, and later effusions. We have not space in this editorial to enlighten him, but we suggest that if the learned gentleman would omit his studies of the dead languages for a few days, and read some simple book on elementary economics, he might be able to write much more intelligently on Socialism.

TWO KINDS OF JIMMIES.

Nearly everybody knows what a jimmy is, even if they have never used one. It is a small bar of steel, and is used by unemployed, desperate workmen to force their way into houses in order to rob them. The burglar does not rob the homes of the poor. He selects the houses of the rich, and in the dead of night forces his way through the door or window, and carries off whatever of value he can secure. The house he enters has been built by some of his workingclass brothers. The wealth he carries away has been produced by the working class, and stolen from them.

If the wielder of the jimmy is caught, he is relentlessly prosecuted. He is seized by a brother workingman—policeman—and thrust into jail. The jails are all built by the working class, for the working class. He is tried before a capitalist judge, and sentenced to a long term in the penitentiary—also built by workingmen, for workingmen. While he is imprisoned his family, if he has one, may beg, starve, or go to the Devil in any way which they choose. They have perfect freedom in this respect, for they are in a free country. If they choose to steal, rather than to starve, they may go to jail also.

Once known to be a jimmy wielder, a man is marked for life. He is ever under the surveillance of the police. In every city in the country they have his picture and Bertillon measurements. His every move is watched. On the slightest suspicion he is arrested and thrown into jail. He is universally considered a dangerous and "undesirable" citizen. If he succeed in his efforts, the burglar may make a fairly comfortable living, though his every waking moment is haunted by the fear of detection. The prison stares him in the face at every turn. The capitalists recognize in him an enemy to their class, and they put the whole machinery of government at work to suppress him.

There is another kind of a jimmy, that is as far superior to the burglar's jimmy as a ninety horsepower automobile is to a stage coach. It too is made out of steel. It is a three-sided affair. On one side is inscribed the word "rent," on the other "profit," and on the third side "interest." Like the burglar's jimmy, it is used to force a way into houses. But not into the houses of the capitalist class. It is used by capitalists to force their way into the homes of workingmen. By the use of this wonderful instrument the owner of it forces his way into the homes of workingmen; and carries therefrom about everything worth taking. Books, pictures, music, leisure, health, happiness, even virtue are taken away. More than that, sometimes he even takes the home itself.

But the wielder of this superior kind of jimmy does not do his robbing at night. He has no cause for concealment. Society, as a whole including the working class that he robs, honors him. If he fall in his effort to enter homes and carry away the wealth therein, he is pitied. If he succeed, he is honored. Instead of being sent to jail, he is sent to Congress. The working class do not look upon him as their enemy. They look upon him as a genius, a great man. His life is not one of hardship, fear and worry, but of luxury and ease. No prison stares him in the face. The magic jimmy he owns is the surest safeguard against such a calamity.

The Capitalist class are class-conscious. The capitalists recognize the fact that the man who lives by forcing his way into their houses and carrying off their wealth—even if it is stolen wealth—is an enemy. By no argument, however shrewdly concocted, could you convince a capitalist that a burglar's interests and his interests are identical. He knows better. He wants to keep the wealth in his possession. The burglar wants to take it from him. There is no identity of interest there.

But the working class are not class-conscious. They do not recognize the wielder of the jimmy—the man who robs their homes—as an enemy. Some of them even can be made to think that he is their friend, and that his interests and theirs are the same.

A workingman robs a capitalist of some of his stolen wealth. The Capitalists send him to prison.

A Capitalist robs countless working class homes. The workers send him to Congress.

Truly it has been said that it takes all kinds of fools to make up the world. The majority of them belong to the working class.

FIRED FOR THINKING.

The Cabin Creek mining companies have taken the last possible step towards reducing the miners to absolute servitude. They have begun to discharge their men for thinking. Last week the Wake Forest Mining Company discharged Comrade J. F. Meadows. The sole reason assigned was that Meadows had been active in propagating Socialism. He had been thinking, and had urged others to think. He refused to let the company do his thinking for him. That is the most deadly crime, in the eyes of the Capitalists, that a man can commit. It is bad for him to join unions, or strike but to really think, that is a heinous offense. For what would become of Capitalism if the workers once began to think for themselves?

Comrade Meadows may now find another master, or he may starve, unless he prefers to beg or steal.

But, we wonder if the coal companies are not making a mistake. The experiment of changing a man's religious or political views by force, has been tried over and over again during the last several thousand years, and has always proved a failure. We believe it always will fail. Once a man gets started to thinking, the only way you can stop him is to kill him, and when you do that, you only make other people think the more. We believe that for every Socialist the coal companies discharge, there will be a score to take their places.

For there are some things that even a West Virginia coal miner will not stand, patient and submissive though he is. For years the coal companies, by force and violence, have prevented the miners from organizing. They have hired thugs to beat and murder union men and union organizers. They have forced them to live in hovels, they have stripped them of all but the bare necessities of life, they have robbed them in every conceivable manner, they have allowed thousands of them to be killed and maimed in preventable accidents.

To all this the miners have submitted with ass-like stupidity, meekly doing the masters' will, and voting to continue such conditions on election day. Now, they have begun to think. Brutal guards have clubbed them into thinking. Empty stomachs and starving families have forced them to think, and all the power of organized capital will never be able to stop them. Clubbed, starved, maimed and murdered. To all this they have submitted. Now the companies would go a step farther. They would shackle their brains, padlock their lips. They seek to make thinking a crime.

If the miners submit to such treatment they deserve the slavery which is theirs. A rebellious slave excites our pity, our sympathy, our admiration; a docile slave only contempt.

THE CITY SHOULD OWN THE WATER AND LIGHT PLANT.

Don't you think it is time our city fathers were making preparations to buy or build a water and light plant? The present franchise only has three years to run now, but this will give Charleston ample time to take steps toward a municipally owned plant. Don't let us put this important matter off until the last moment. A great majority of the most substantial citizens of the city are in favor of the city owning this utility. Our experience with the present privately owned monopoly has been anything but satisfactory. We have been given poor service and charged extortionate rates. The corporation is growing rich at the expense of the people. Last year the gross receipts of the Water and Light Company were close to \$173,000.00, with the extortionate meter rate they are now charging receipts this year will amount to at least \$200,000.00. It stands to reason that the expense of operating and maintaining the plant would not exceed \$50,000.00 a year. At this rate the water and light plant would pay the city a net income of \$150,000.00 a year, which would build a plant better than the present system in five years. The franchise the present company are trying to force the people of Charleston to give them is out of the question. In this age of civic progress no up to date progressive city would give a corporation a monopoly for thirty years. We feel confident that our council and city officials will not give this franchise renewal a thought. There is a tendency on the part of the big business interest of our city. The Chamber of Commerce, to exhaust the city's finances so we will not be able to buy or build a water and light service. They have advocated the issuing of bonds for paving, building a market house, a public library and park, but first let us invest our money in something that will be a source of revenue to the city and the proceeds from this will make the other improvements without taxing the people direct for them. Instead of wasting time considering the terms of an unreasonable franchise let us devote our time and thought to devising ways and means to establish a water and light plant that will be owned by the city. We are due this much to the rising generation, don't turn the city over to them in bankruptcy and without an asset. It is hard to stand for the robbing and unfair oppressive terms the present company are forcing upon us for three years yet. Don't give them a strong hold on the city for thirty more.

Carbondale Local Unions Nos. 1037 and 531, United Mine Workers of America, have each sent us a check for \$100 worth of stock in the Social Labor Publishing Company. We assure the members of these unions our appreciation of this assistance. The Carbondale and National are the most progressive Local Unions in the district. In time of need the mine workers can depend on the Labor Argus for all the support in their power. Our columns are always open to organized labor, and anything we can do for its advancement will be done cheerfully.

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THE EIGHT HOUR DAY IN MILWAUKEE.

By Carl D. Thompson.
The city council of Milwaukee has gone on record officially establishing the eight hour day for all its public employees, including not only all laborers and mechanics that work for the city directly, but also for all who are employed by any contractor or sub-contractor doing work for the city.

The ordinance reads as follows:
"AN ORDINANCE fixing the number of hours which shall constitute a day's work for laborers, workmen and mechanics employed upon the public works of the city of Milwaukee.

THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:—

"Section 1. The service and employment of all laborers, workmen and mechanics who are now or may hereafter be employed by the city of Milwaukee, or by any contractor or sub-contractor upon any of the public works of said city, is hereby limited and restricted to eight hours in any one calendar day; provided, that not less than the current rate of daily wages in the locality where such contract may be performed, or the same or similar services rendered by such laborer, workmen or mechanic shall be paid under the provisions of this ordinance by said city or by any contractor or sub-contractor upon any public works of said city. And it shall be unlawful for any officer of the city government, or any such contractor of sub-contractor, whose duty it shall be to employ direct, or control the services of such laborers, workmen or mechanics, to require or permit any such laborer, workmen or mechanic to work more than eight hours in any calendar day except in case of extraordinary emergency.

"Section 2. Any officer of said city, contractor or sub-contractor whose duty it shall be to employ direct or control any laborer workmen or mechanic employed on any public works of the city, who shall intentionally violate any provisions of this ordinance, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and for each and every offense shall upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not less than ten dollars nor more than fifty dollars, or by imprisonment in the house of correction not more than thirty days, or by both such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court having jurisdiction thereof.

"Section 3. The board of public works is hereby required to make the provisions of this ordinance a part of the specifications of each and every contract which said board shall hereafter let for the performance of any public work pursuant to law. And all contracts not incorporating the provisions of this ordinance shall be null and void.

"Section 4. All contractors and sub-contractors violating the provisions of this ordinance shall forfeit all rights under their contracts.

"Section 5. This ordinance shall not apply to existing contracts.

"Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication."

This ordinance establishing the eight hour day is in line with the policy of the present administration in Milwaukee, which, as is well known, is under the control of the Socialists, a distinctly working class movement.

This fight for the eight hour day began years ago, and has been kept up continuously since 1904, when the Socialists elected their first representative to the city council. In that year the city was building some big twenty million gallon engines in their water works system. The Socialists tried to get at resolution passed providing for the eight hour day for the men who were employed upon this work. The resolution was adopted and constituted the first victory for organized labor in this respect.

Later on, in 1906, various street car companies were seeking franchises from the city. The Socialists opposed the granting of these franchises except upon condition that the company should employ union labor and grant their employees an eight hour day. The provisions were defeated, but the Socialists kept up the fight for the eight hour day in other directions.

About the same time an ordinance was introduced in the city council providing for the general eight hour day for all public employees. The machinist's union sent petitions and resolutions to the city council urging the passage of the ordinance. But the city council was still at that time in the control of the Republicans and Democrats and they refused to pass the ordinance.

Meanwhile the courts had rendered decisions adverse to the eight hour ordinance and thus served to strengthen the position of the opposition.

The Socialists introduced a resolution to have the case appealed to the supreme court, instructing the City Attorney in the matter. This resolution was adopted, but it seems that the City Attorney did nothing.

Other measures looking to the shortening of hours and the establishment of an eight hour day were

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introduced from time to time, and besides, a number of resolutions which had the effect of shortening hours of labor. For example, the bridge tenders were on duty for 78 hours consecutively. By readjusting the shifts and adding a few men it became possible to reduce these hours so that the men were on duty only 12 hours per day.

But best of all was the passage of the ordinance referred to above fixing the official policy of the city of Milwaukee upon an eight hour day for all of its public employees.

THE MARCH OF DESTINY

(Continued from Page Five.)

This is where we are invulnerable. You can kill a lie by vigorously attacking it and showing the people that it is a lie.

But the truth thrives on opposition.

Every attack upon the truth causes people to investigate. And when they investigate it, they discover that it is the truth.

So, to attack Socialism is merely another means of propagating it.

This aggravating fact leaves the capitalists stranded. They do not know which way to turn. They will be damned if they do, and likewise if they don't. Small wonder that they are scratching their heads in vexations perplexity. It is beginning to dawn upon them that Socialism is inevitable.

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have written THE propaganda book of the year—
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It contains the heart and meat of the whole movement in a nutshell. It will put the workers on the right road. Be sure to have it. The shortest, weightiest and most interesting book on Socialism. 26c. per copy. \$1 a dozen. \$5 a hundred. Express prepaid. **Chas. H. Kerr & Co., 118 W. Kinzie St., Chicago**